

## II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for prepayment of a content, comprising the steps of:

generating one or more authentication keys;

providing an authentication key validity database for verifying the validity of any of the one or more generated authentication keys;

delivering at least one of the one or more authentication keys to a user;

informing the user of the availability of a plurality of different contents for downloading;

receiving from the user over a first communications link an indication of a desired content and a request for the desired content;

receiving from the user ~~an~~ the at least one authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content;

verifying the validity of the at least one authentication key by means of the validity database; ~~and~~

providing the requested content to the user over a second communications link; and

invalidating the at least one authentication key in the validity database in response to the providing of the requested content to the user.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~an~~ an individual one of the one or more authentication keykeys is required each time a content is provided.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, the method further comprising:

~~the step of arranging each of the one or more authentication keys to indicate a time period during which they are valid;~~

~~the step of wherein verifying of the validity of the at least one authentication key comprises the step of includes comparing of the a present date with the time period during which the at least one authentication key is valid; and~~

~~the step of rejecting invalidating expired authentication keys.~~

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, the method further comprising:

~~the step of scanning the validity database of used authentication keys for detecting lapsed to detect and remove invalid authentication keys for removing them from the database of used authentication keys.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~claim 5,~~ wherein ~~the method further comprises the step of claim 1, further comprising~~ modifying the validity database on providing the requested content so that the monetary value corresponding to the at least one authentication key indicating the ~~payment~~

prepayment is reduced according to a price of the content requested by the user.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one authentication key is a printed user readable code.
10. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises ~~the step of concealing~~ the at least one authentication key with a non-reversibly removable concealing means.
11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the method further comprises printing a group of the at least one authentication keys on a card.
12. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the first communications link is based on at least one of the following: a data network, a telephone network, a mobile telecommunications network, a local area network and a wide area network.
13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, the method further comprising ~~the steps of~~:  
  
allowing the user to test a content requested; and  
  
receiving a final verification from the user before the user is provided with the content.
14. (Currently Amended) A system for prepayment of a content, comprising:  
  
means for generating one or more authentication keys;

an authentication key validity database for verifying the validity of any of the one or more generated authentication keys;

means for delivering at least one of the one or more authentication keys to a user;

means for informing the user of the availability of a plurality of different contents for downloading;

means for receiving from the user over a first communications link an indication of a desired content and a request for the desired content; and

means for receiving from the user ~~an~~ the at least one authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content;

means for verifying the validity of the at least one authentication key by means of the validity database; and

means for providing the requested content to the user over a second communications link-; and

means for invalidating the at least one authentication key in the validity database in response to the providing of the requested content to the user.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for prepayment of a content, comprising:

computer readable program means for generating one or more authentication keys;

computer readable program means for providing an authentication key validity database for verifying the

validity of any of the one or more generated authentication keys;

computer readable program means for causing a computer to provide at least one of the one or more authentication keys to a user;

computer readable program means for causing a computer to inform the user of the availability of a plurality of different contents for downloading;

computer readable program means for causing a computer to receive from the user over a first a first communications link an indication of a desired content and a request for the desired content; and

computer readable program means for receiving from the user ~~an~~the at least one authentication key to indicate prepayment for the requested content;

computer readable program means for verifying the validity of the at least one authentication key by means of the validity database; and

computer readable program means for causing a computer to provide the requested content to the user over a second communications link-; and

computer readable program means for invalidating the at least one authentication key in the validity database in response to the providing of the requested content to the user.